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ABSTRACT

The comprehensive concept for dropout prevention is a restructuring of the school to serve better the educational and developmental needs of students, based on meeting those needs on an individual basis. The basic approach to serving students is adjusted by lengthening the school day, developing a student support services team, implementing direct services to at-risk students, and utilizing mobile or part-time teachers to reduce class size. Other program components include counseling, emphasis on prevention, mentoring, and networking of school and community resources. Support personnel are most directly involved in the program, but all school personnel are involved in the comprehensive concept. Students benefit by improved self-concept, monitoring of risk factors, attention to individual learning styles, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. School staff benefit from reduced class size and paper work, positive partnerships with teachers, and improved morale. The school system benefits from a reduced dropout rate, improved attendance, and positive school climate. Financial needs are estimated to be $15,000 to $30,000 per year. (A list of research findings on students at risk are presented. Sample forms for the program are included.) (ABL)

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PLANNING THE COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPT

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SUMMARY REPORT

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND STUDENTS AT RISK: THE COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPT

The comprehensive concept is a restructuring of the school to serve better the educational and developmental needs of students. It is based on meeting those needs on an individual basis, emphasizing a flexible approach. The administration and faculty of the school pool their talents, expertise, and resources to achieve the maximum results which a program of this type can provide. Within this concept, the entire school unit, from administrator to student, is programmed for success.

The basic approach to serving students is adjusted by lengthening the school day, developing a student support services team, implementing direct services to at-risk students, and utilizing mobile -- or part-time -- teachers to reduce class size. As a result of the restructuring process, the entire student population, staff, and administration benefit from the positive school climate which becomes a major focus. The comprehensive concept can be applied to any school at any level.

What are the components of the comprehensive concept?

- Student support services coordinator
- Student support services team
- Identification process for at-risk students
- Flexible scheduling
- Mobile teachers
- Consistent discipline policy for total school population
- Emphasis on prevention
- Counseling
- Lengthening of the school day
- Mentoring
- Networking of school and community resources

What personnel are involved in implementing the comprehensive concept?

All personnel in the school are involved either directly or indirectly in the implementation of comprehensive concept. Support people -- counselors; dropout prevention and students at risk personnel; and exceptional children, Chapter 1, migrant education, remediation, JTPA, and vocational teachers -- are the most directly involved as they generally constitute the membership of the student support services team.

What are the benefits to students?

- Improved self-concept
- Personalized education plan for each student
- Improved delivery of services
- On-going monitoring of risk factors
- Caring and support from a responsible adult
- Attention to individual learning styles
- Integration of subject matter for improved concept development
- Improved academic performance
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Less overt labeling of at-risk students

What are the benefits to the school staff?

- Reduced class size
- Reduced paper work
- Increased understanding of and respect for one another's roles
- Support system for teachers
- Positive partnerships with parents
- Positive professional attitude
- Improved morale
- Elimination of duplication of services

What are the benefits to the school system?

- Reduced dropout rate
- Improved attendance
- Reduced behavioral problems and suspensions
- Consistent rules and policies for entire school population
- Coordination of services from grade to grade and school to school
- Systematic professional plan for addressing the needs of students
- Positive school climate

What financial resources are needed to implement the comprehensive concept?

The level of funding needed by a school system to implement the comprehensive concept will be based on needs identified after a restructuring of the existing resources has been completed. Therefore, the actual dollar amount will vary among school systems. Funding may be needed for any of the following:

- Mobile teacher(s) -- $3,300 per year for one instructional period per day;
- Student support services coordinator -- $6,000-$12,000 to release for one to two periods a day an existing staff member to counsel and to coordinate the student support services team (unless such person is already available);
- Part-time counselor -- $5,000-$7,000 per year; and
- Part-time secretary -- $4,000-$6,000 per year.

It is unlikely that any given school will require all of these positions. Financial needs will range from $15,000-$30,000 per year, depending upon the resources presently in existence.

STUDY FINDINGS ON STUDENTS AT RISK

- Recent dropouts, and particularly their parents, were very cooperative and articulate in discussing their situations.
- Many parents admitted to being uninformed that their children were in danger of dropping out until it was too late to do much about it.
- Reasons most frequently given for dropping out were related to work, to dislike of school, or to too many absences.
- Three-quarters of the dropouts claimed they did not talk to anyone at school about their decision prior to making it.
- Dropouts from the high-rate dropout schools left more frequently when they turned 16 than did those from low-rate dropout schools (54% versus 24%).
- Dropouts from the high-rate dropout schools were less likely to be currently employed and more likely to be attending a community college or alternative school program than those from the low rate dropout schools.
- Dropouts were more likely to have been working long hours just prior to dropping out than those working students still in school; half indicated their job had been interfering with school.
- Reviews of transcripts indicated large numbers of absences prior to dropping out and a large number of retentions in the 9th and 10th grades.
- There was a high degree of agreement that leaving school had been a mistake; a great majority of the recent dropouts indicated plans to return to school to get a diploma or a G.E.D.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

- Access to services outside school
  - work program
  - social services
  - family counseling
- Basic remediation courses
  - reading and math skills
  - subject networking
- Counseling - Career counseling beyond high school

PREVENTION PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- All the A, B, Cs in place
- Inside involvement - the need to belong
- Individualized instruction and attention
- Flexible scheduling
- Attendance monitoring
- Parent involvement/home visitations and school conferences

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM AND STUDENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT REPORT

School Name _____ Unit Number _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

	Program Type	Funding Sources	Staff Employed		Restructuring Recommendations
			Full-time	Part-time	
DROPOUT PREVENTION	In-School Suspension				
	Job Placement				
	Alternative School				
	Extended School Day				
	High-Risk Counseling				
	Academic Remediation				
	Transition				
	Attendance Counseling				
	Other				
JTPA	Education for Employment				
	Pre-Employment Skills Training				
	School to Work Transition				
	Testing and Assessment				
	Pre-Tech Skills Training				
	Basic Remedial Education				
	Regular Work Experience				
	Entry Employment				
	Tryout Employment				
	Other				

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Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

	Program Type	Funding Sources	Staff Employed		Restructuring Recommendations
			Full-time	Part-time	
SPECIAL GRANT FUNDING					
CHAPTER 1					

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM AND STUDENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT REPORT

School Name _____ Unit Number _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

	Program Type	Funding Sources	Staff Employed		Restructuring Recommendations
			Full-time	Part-time	
MIGRANT EDUCATION					
STATE REMEDIATION					

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM AND STUDENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Contact Person _____ Title _____

Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

	Program Type	Funding Sources	Staff Employed		Restructuring Recommendations
			Full-time	Part-time	
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION					
CAREER LADDER					

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM AND STUDENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

	Program Type	Funding Sources	Staff Employed		Restructuring Recommendations
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EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN					

GENERAL INFORMATION

TIMEFRAME OF SCHOOL DAY

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF SCHOOL SYSTEM

EARLY IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

EVALUATION PROCESS OF STUDENTS

COUNSELING SERVICES FOR COURSE SELECTION

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DIRECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STUDENT NEEDS

ABSENTEE SYSTEM AND FOLLOW-UP

ALTERNATIVE COURSE SELECTION

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

FACILITY

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

COMMUNITY COLLEGE NETWORKING

_____

OTHER

_____

_____

PROGRAM PROFILES

PROGRAM TYPE _____

Recommendations _____

PROGRAM TYPE _____

Recommendations _____

PROGRAM TYPE _____

Recommendations _____

SUMMARY REPORT

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM AND STUDENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT

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PROGRAM _____

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